

FEMA Urges Residents to Stay Safe as Hurricane Ida Set to Make Landfall

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WASHINGTON -- Hurricane Ida is set to hit the U.S. northern Gulf Coast as a dangerous major hurricane today. FEMA is tracking the danger of life-threatening storm surge along the coasts of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida in the warning area. Storm surge may reach 12-16 feet or greater where the hurricane makes landfall.

“This is a major hurricane. If you did not evacuate, find a safe location to ride out the storm,” said FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell. “Avoid enclosed areas, such as an attic, where you may become trapped by storm surge or flooding. Storm surge can cause water levels to rise quickly and flood large areas in just minutes, and you could be left with no time to take action. Please be safe and listen to local emergency management officials.”

Ida will bring potentially catastrophic wind damage where the core makes landfall and will bring hurricane force winds in portions along the Louisiana coast, including the New Orleans metropolitan area. Overtopping of local levees outside of the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System is possible where local inundation values may be higher.

The storm will also produce heavy rainfall today through Monday across the central Gulf Coast from southeastern Louisiana and coastal Mississippi to far southwestern Alabama, which will result in considerable to life-threatening flash and urban flooding.

A tornado watch has been issued for parts of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana and Mississippi until 7 p.m. CT tonight.

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. approved [Louisiana's](#) request for an emergency declaration on Aug. 27, and [Mississippi's](#) request on Aug. 28. The declarations authorize FEMA to coordinate disaster relief efforts in support of the states by identifying, mobilizing and providing equipment and resources necessary to alleviate hardship and suffering of the local population. Additionally, the declarations authorize FEMA to provide appropriate assistance for required emergency measures to save lives and to protect property, public health and safety in all 64 Louisiana parishes and 24 Mississippi



counties and the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.

Keep in mind that areas far from the storm's center can experience effects such as severe flooding, intense rainfall, and heavy winds.

Anyone in the forecast path should rush to complete final preparations, monitor your local news for updates and directions provided by local officials and please check on your neighbors, if it is safe to do so.

- **Storm surge can cause water levels to rise quickly** and flood large areas in just minutes, and you could be left with no time to take action. Additionally, during the peak of a storm surge event, it is unlikely that emergency responders will be able to reach you if you are in danger.
- **Use a generator safely.** Never use a generator inside a home, basement, shed or garage even if doors and windows are open.
 - **Keep generators outside and far away from your home.** Windows, doors and vents could allow carbon monoxide to come indoors. Read both the label on your generator and the owner's manual and follow the instructions.
- Please be safe and listen to local emergency management officials and watch for emergency alerts and real-time safety notifications on evacuations.

Federal Actions Ahead of Hurricane Ida

- FEMA is working with its federal, state and local partners as well as non-governmental agencies to support needs of areas affected by Ida. The agency positioned supplies such as meals, water and generators to assist states with impacts from this storm.
- More than 2,400 FEMA employees are deployed to Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas and ready to provide additional support as needed.
- There are 10 FEMA Incident Management Assistance Teams ready to support state needs. Six are deployed to Louisiana, two in Alabama, two in Mississippi and three on standby to deploy if necessary.
- FEMA liaison officers are deployed to Alabama, Louisiana and Texas.
- Incident Support Bases have been established in Alexandria, La., and Montgomery and Selma, Ala. Commodities, equipment and personnel are being pre-positioned to rapidly deploy post-storm, as needed. This includes:
 - Nine Urban Search and Rescue teams staged in Louisiana and three more in Alabama.



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- A U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Power Restoration team.
- Over 90 ambulances and emergency medical service providers for post-storm evacuation support as needed. Additionally, eight fixed-wing and seven rotary air ambulances are being staged for post-storm patient evacuation if needed.
- FEMA has staged more than 2.5 million meals, 3.1 million liters of water, 76,000 tarps and 64 generators. Twenty-nine additional generators are staged at Maxwell AFB in Alabama.
- Mobile Emergency Response Support assets including Emergency Operations Vehicles are deployed to support Louisiana and Mississippi.
- FEMA's Hurricane Liaison at the National Hurricane Center in Miami continues to provide real time information about Hurricane Ida's track and intensity.
- FEMA assigned additional personnel from the federal government, including the Department of Defense, Health and Human Services and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to provide support as needed.
- A U.S. Department of Health and Human Services incident management team has deployed to Dallas, Texas.

Stay Safe During Hurricane Conditions

- **If you did not evacuate, find a safe location to ride out the storm.** Avoid enclosed areas where you may become trapped, such as an attic.
- **Stay informed.** Individuals in Louisiana can text IDA to 67283 for storm updates from the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness or visit [GOHSEP > GOHSEP \(la.gov\)](https://www.gohsep.la.gov). Individuals in Alabama should follow the guidance of local officials or visit ema.alabama.gov/. For storm updates in Mississippi, visit [Hurricane Ida – MEMA \(msema.org\)](https://www.msema.org).
- **Stay put.** Stay off the roads. Emergency workers may be assisting people in flooded areas or cleaning up debris. You can help them by staying off the roads and out of the way. If you evacuated, do not return home until local officials say it is safe.
- **Gather supplies.** [Have enough supplies](#) for your household. Include medication, disinfectant supplies, face [masks](#), [pet supplies](#) and a battery-operated radio with extra batteries. After a hurricane, you may not have access to these supplies for days or weeks.
- **Don't drive through flood waters.** Almost half of all flash flood deaths happen in vehicles. When in your car, look out for flooding in low lying areas at bridges and at highway dips. As little as 6 inches of water may cause you to lose control of your vehicle.
- **Check on friends and family.** If you are able, please check on your neighbors,



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friends, and family some may need more help than others. You can help by sharing emergency alerts, and real-time safety notifications.

Stay Safe During Power Outages

- **Avoid carbon monoxide poisoning.** A grill, camp stove or other gasoline, propane, natural gas or charcoal burning devices should never be used inside a home, garage, basement, crawlspace or any partially enclosed area. These should only be used outdoors and at least 20 feet away from windows.
- **Use a generator safely.** Never use a generator inside a home, basement, shed or garage even if doors and windows are open.
- **Keep generators outside and far away from your home.** Windows, doors and vents could allow carbon monoxide to come indoors. Read both the label on your generator and the owner's manual and follow the instructions.
- **Use only flashlights or battery-powered lanterns for emergency lighting.** NEVER use candles during a blackout or power outage due to extreme risk of fire.
- **Power outages can impact the safety of food** in your refrigerator and freezer.
 - Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed to keep your food as fresh as possible. The refrigerator will keep food cold for about four hours. A full freezer will keep the temperature for about 48 hours. Use coolers with ice if necessary.
 - Throw away any food that has been exposed to a temperature of 40°Fahrenheit (4°Celsius) or higher for two hours or more or that has an unusual odor, color or texture. When in doubt, throw it out!
 - Never taste food or rely on appearance or odor to determine its safety. Some foods may look and smell fine, but if they have been at room temperature too long, heat-resistant bacteria that cause food-borne illnesses can start growing quickly.

Keep Yourself, Family and Neighbors Safe Before and After Flooding

- **Stay off the roads.** Emergency workers will be assisting people in flooded areas. You can help them by staying off the roads and out of the way.
- **Check on neighbors who may require assistance, if it is safe to do so.** This includes individuals with infants, children as well as older adults, people with disabilities and others with access and functional need.
- **Don't drive through flood waters.** Almost half of all flash flood deaths happen in vehicles. When in your car, look out for flooding in low-lying areas at bridges and at highway dips. As little as 6 inches of water may cause you to lose control of your vehicle.
- **Be aware of areas where floodwaters have receded.** Roads may have weakened and could collapse under the weight of a car.



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- **Stay out of floodwater.** Standing water may be electrically charged from underground or downed power lines or contain hazards such as human and livestock waste, dangerous debris, contaminants that can lead to illness, or wild or stray animals.

Stay Safe During a Tornado

If you are under a tornado warning, follow these tips to stay safe:

- Have a way to get alerts. Make sure your phone's [Wireless Emergency Alert](#) function is working and follow your local weather forecast for updated emergency information.
- Stay away from windows, doors and outside walls.
- Get as many walls between yourself and the tornado as possible. Interior, low level rooms without windows provide the most protection.
- Crouch as low as possible to the floor, facing down. Cover your head with your hands. Even in an interior room, you should cover yourself with some sort of thick padding such as a mattress or blankets to protect against falling debris.

